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**June 3, 2008**

**WEST VIRGINIA BULLETIN NO: WV-360- 8-11**

**SUBJECT: PER – Restrictions on Political Activity**

**Purpose: To provide guidance for career employees on political activities.**

**Expiration Date: This bulletin expires September 30, 2008.**

This is a reminder to all career employees of the restrictions on political activities under the Hatch Act this election year. Attached is an easy to read guide on Political Activities Do's and Don'ts.

A Political Activity Quick Reference Chart can be found at [www.usda-ethics.net/rules/rule20.htm](http://www.usda-ethics.net/rules/rule20.htm). This chart explains what political activity is permissible both off-duty and on-duty.

If you have any questions regarding political activities, contact your Human Resources Office at 304-284-7552.

/s/

KEVIN WICKEY  
State Conservationist

Attachment

Dist: E



## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES – Do’s and Don’t’s**

### **Restrictions on Political Activity by Career Staff Below the SES Level**

**NOT permissible:** The 1993 Amendments greatly liberalized what you may do provided you abide by “time and place” restrictions. The rules for you correspond to those applicable to non-career Senior Executive Service (SES) and Schedule Cs:

1. You may not solicit political contributions from anyone at anytime (there is a narrow exception for soliciting within the membership of a federal employee union for its Political Action Committee.)
2. You may not encourage or discourage political activity by persons doing business with, or regulated by, USDA.
3. You may not use the authority or influence of your office to interfere with an election.
4. You may not engage in political activity while on duty, in a government office, in a government vehicle, or wearing a government uniform or insignia. This also means you may not permit your official title to be used when your political activity is otherwise permissible.
5. You may not wear political buttons on duty or display political materials in your office – but you may have a bumper sticker on your private car even if parked in a government lot.
6. You may not seek the nomination for, or election to, a partisan political office (there is an exception if running as an independent in certain specific localities, including most of the D.C. metropolitan area.)
7. If accompanying a Political Appointment Senate Confirmed (PAS) in mixed official and political travel, you may not advance the political element of the trip, may not participate in any political events during duty hours (although you may accompany the PAS, but not participate in the event, if your presence is required in support of agency business.)

8. You may not volunteer your time in support of a political party or candidate through your USDA PAS supervisor – any such activity must be volunteered directly to the party or candidate committee.

**Permissible:** On your own time and away from the office, you may engage in a broad range of political activity except fundraising, running for partisan office, or politicking persons doing business with, or regulated by, USDA

1. You may seek election to a non-partisan office (and run as an independent for local partisan office in certain specified localities – including most of the D.C. metropolitan area).

2. You may serve as an officer in a party or candidate campaign committee in either a volunteer or on a compensated basis.

3. You may campaign for or against candidates by preparing and/or delivering speeches, distributing campaign materials, and organizing and/or attending rallies.

4. You may contribute to campaigns, develop fundraising programs, attend fundraisers, and even serve as an officer for a campaign (but not treasurer); however, you may not allow your name to be included on any solicitation materials or personally host a fundraiser.

5. You may engage in partisan voter registration activities and partisan get out the vote (GOTV) drives.

6. You may sign nominating and ballot access petitions for partisan candidates and participate in circulating such petitions.

7. You may serve as a delegate to a local, state or national political party caucus or convention.

8. You may serve as poll watcher on behalf of a candidate or political party.

9. You may display political materials in your yard, on your personal vehicle and, when off the clock, on your person.

10. You may accompany your PAS superior in mixed official/political travel, if your presence is needed in support of official purposes (i.e., for security communications back to the office) and you do not participate in the political events during your duty hours.